

WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Meeting of Friday, June 27, 2014
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) was held on JUNE 27, 2014 at 9 AM in the Selectmen Chambers.

With a quorum present, Chairman Wilhelm called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM
Selectmen Present: Jack Wilhelm, Chair; Catherine Harrison, Vice Chair; Ken Whittaker, Clerk
Also Present: Mark Andrews, Town Administrator; Catherine Tinsley, Minutes Secretary

Abbreviations used
BOS Board of Selectmen
TA Town Administrator

Public information
Agenda

The Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator met to discuss ways to be more effective, identify important issues, and share ideas / suggestions. The board did not take action during the retreat.

Operational Issues

New Email System – The Town’s web site provider will be asked to submit a proposal to add a use friendly email system through the current web site, and a separate cost to include Outlook.

A complete review of the ITT will be done.

- The Town Administrator will seek alternate email programs for consideration

Property Tax Relief

Wenham’s PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) program will be reviewed and updated to include potentially applicable properties.

- The TA will draft a list of potential properties.

Improve Communications with Constituents

Information thought to be important to residents included:

- Development application/ projects (potential)
- Project updates from the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission
- Collaboration/shared services
- The Selectmen agreed updates be included during the BOS meetings with quarterly reports from Planning Board, Zoning Board, Conservation Commission

Suggestions taken under consideration:

- Televising more meetings e.g. Planning Board, Zoning Board, Conservation Commission
- Retrofitting the Council on Aging Building for broadcast
- Town Administrator gives an update through cable programming
- The TA will work with the BOS to better understand how citizens want to receive information.

Improve relationship with Hamilton

- ECO - The BOS requested the Town Administrator draft a letter to the Town of Hamilton requesting a list of shared equipment purchased by the two towns for the Emergency Center Operations including the date of purchase, and residual value up to the date Wenham transferred to the Regional Center. The Selectmen asked to review the draft letter.
- Library – The two town to review the updated pay scale/wages for librarians
- Pool – Going forward to share the plan for the possible new replacement pool

- Understand and Resolve any outstanding issues
- Grants
- Collins Report
- Joint efforts regarding local aid
- Hamilton Downtown Development Plan
- BOS requested an update; this will be an agenda item

Policy Development

Citizen's Involvement in Governance

- Possible increase the Board of Selectmen from three to five sitting members
- Get residents involved – Improve communication e.g. short description of committee responsibilities /openings and a contact person who is on the committee
- Town meeting – increase attendance e.g. onsite babysitting; run the COA van

Develop a comprehensive wage and classification study as well as job description for each non-union employee including salary steps. Mr. Andrews noted the Personnel Handbook has not been updated since 2001; he recommended this be updated.

- The TA will draft a list of non-union, non-contracted of current employees/positions.

Update Long Rang Financial and Capital Plan for budget season to include equipment with a life span of more than five years e.g. fire truck (s), DPW equipment

- The TA will work with Department Heads and the Finance Director to draft a 3 to 5 year plan

Planning & Discussions

Audit – The Audit Committee met and accepted the FY14 Audit proposal from Powers & Sullivan.

It was the recommendation of the TA to activate an update for VADAR accounting software to track encumbrances for department heads.

IT Services Planning

- The TA will continue to research sharing potential with the Schools and Hamilton. A general review of the ITT will be done.

Land use Coordination

The TA recommended activating the Project Review Committee to enhance efficiencies throughout the Town departments and improve communications.

- It was the consensus of the Board that the legal status of the committee be confirmed.

Planning and Discussions for a transition plan for Town Counsel

Town Counsel is in support for a transition plan to be drafted, and to include an assistant. The salary will remain as budgeted and shared.

The BOS agreed this person be a Wenham resident, has a minimum of ten years experience, has local knowledge, and agrees to work with Mr. Weaver as lead counsel

FY 2015 Proposed Budget Goals, Process, and Timelines

- Timeline – The BOS requested to coordinate earlier with the Finance Committee in joint meetings, and joint meetings with Department Heads. A joint meeting in September/October with the Town of Hamilton, and the School Committee regarding the budgets, a broad outline of what is considered important, potential savings, long term Master plan, update on implementation of studies.
- The TA was directed to draft a letter to the Town of Hamilton/HWRSD requesting this information.

Town Report Committee

The Annual Town Report will be started in the early fall in an effort to reduce the pressure on the timeline nearing Town Meeting.

- The TA was asked to draft a new timeline and to confirm what is required to be in the Report and if there are cost savings in producing the Annual Report.

Cell Tower Alternative

- Mr. Andrews was directed to schedule a presentation by one of the alternate cell phone companies that does not depend on cell towers but on a series of smaller units to provide coverage.

Affordable Housing – Maple Street

The application for a housing project on Maple Street is at the State level. It has not come before any town board/committee to date.

- The TA will get an update from Harborlight on the status.

Best Practices for cost savings for small towns

The Collins Center report for small towns will be reviewed again for possible consolidation/shared services to provide tax relief/cost savings. It was noted that Wenham could seek shared services with neighboring towns.

Regional Emergency Communication Center and Transition Issues

Wenham joined the regional center a year ago. Other towns connected include Essex, Topsfield fire services, Amesbury, Middleton. The City of Beverly has deferred joining to the fall of 2014. Five of the six original communities are participating at some level.

- The BOS asked for a detailed report on the data confirming the projected cost savings and an evaluation on the services with an in depth analysis including expenses, training, equipment, updates, technology and what is anticipated over the next five years and to include a report from the Director of the Regional Center and the Police/Fire Chiefs.

Operational Issues & Policy Development

Transition of Town Clerk's Office

The Transition of the newly elected Town Clerk is going smoothly. The office will receive some additional support for the upcoming elections in November. The appropriated funds for the transition plan may not all need to be spent.

Working Town Energy Committee

The TA continues to work with the Energy Committee researching information and drafting the Request for Quotes to purchase streetlights, including available grants.

- The BOS supported a few test areas of a limited number of streetlights be done initially.

Professional development training

The TA is working on an IT training program for staff. He will coordinate with the Schools and Hamilton if possible.

- The TA was asked to provide an inventory of town computers to the BOS.

Adjournment

- The TA will prioritize the action items from the retreat and distribute to the BOS.

The BOS adjourned unanimously at 12:23 PM

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley
6.30.14